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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

VOLUME I

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JULY, 1895

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NUMBER 1

## THE ERA OF SOCIOLOGY.

SOCIOLOGY has a foremost place in the thought of modern men. Approve or deplore the fact at pleasure, we cannot escape it. Examination of the fact in a few of its relations will properly introduce a statement of the aims of this JOURNAL.

I. *In our age the fact of human association is more obtrusive and relatively more influential than in any previous epoch.* Modern men are made aware in more ways than former generations that their lot is affected by the existence of other men. Wherever the proportion of laborers in the extractive industries is diminishing and the proportion of people occupied with intermediate processes of production and consumption is correspondingly increasing, it would be surprising if the change were not accompanied by some modifications in men's views about the relative importance of the physical and the social elements in the conditions of human existence. As industries become diversified, as division of labor and competition become territorial and international, not less than individual, as occupations are more visibly affected by the actions of distant persons, as communication becomes accurate and rapid between groups of men industrially related though geographically separate, perception of dependence upon physical conditions ceases to be the dominant factor in human calculation. Perception of subjection to human devices or of advantage to be won by personal combinations becomes decisive.

The ranchman in Montana who has safely wintered his herd but cannot ship them to a market because a manufacturer in Illinois has failed to preserve an understanding with coal heavers and machinists and carpenters; the miner in Nevada who ferrets out a coincidence between certain acts of legislation and the decline of his silver in value; the rolling-mill operative in Pennsylvania who discovers that a body of men in Washington may vote an increase or decrease of his work and wages—all these and the rest represented by them learn to disregard the fixed factors in human relations, and instead to watch other players in the game of life as exclusively as opponents at the chessboard or rival teams on gridiron or diamond.

Through influences such as these it comes about that the fact of human association becomes a most intimate reality to the great masses of men long before philosophers have begun to learn its import.

II. *The distinguishing mental trait of our age is undisciplined social self-consciousness.* Men are more definitely and variously aware of each other than ever before. They are also more promiscuously perplexed by each other's presence. We sometimes credit our generation with perceiving that we are members one of another, but the content of popular consciousness is more precisely rendered in the version, "*meddlers one with another.*" We know just enough about social contacts to regard man as the animal that makes the most trouble for its own species. Whatever be men's aims or acts it seems impossible for them to venture upon an enterprise so rare that collision can be avoided with the anticipating prejudice, property, or purpose of other men. The fate that goes with us or against us into our battle no longer seems to be a power of nature, or a superhuman champion, but merely detached or confederate human volition. Whatever modern men's theory of the social bond, no men have ever had more conclusive evidence that the bond exists.

III. *This inevitable contact of man with men has produced confident popular philosophies of human association.* Social self-consciousness formulates itself as guiding assumption or as controlling

dogma. Modern men are not merely aware of these contacts with compatriot and alien, official and civilian, wage-earner and wage-payer, capitalist and landlord and tenant, union and non-union laborer, brain-worker and brawn-worker, industrial and criminal, rich and poor seekers of employment and shunners of employment. Men of all ranks and stations think over these contacts, they listen to arguments about them, they acquire opinions, they accept beliefs.

Before the invention of printing an occasional individual reflected upon societary relations in the large. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century social philosophy had broken out of the schools and in one country had enlisted popular strength enough to destroy a decaying dynasty. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, illiterates are become a feeble minority in the chief countries of civilization and the whole population that can read, with many additions from those who cannot, maintain in perpetual session a lyceum of sociology. If a little learning is a dangerous thing, jeopardy from that source is today universal. The millions have fragmentary knowledge of societary relations, and they are trying to transmute that meager knowledge into social doctrine and policy. The peculiar element of danger in the situation was just now suggested. Modern thought assumes that the fixed factors in human conditions are insignificant as compared with the elements that may be determined by agreement. Popular judgment is just now intoxicated with the splendid half truth that society is what men choose to make it. Popular social philosophy in its countless forms is today unanimous in speculation about institutional rearrangement without due estimate of human limitations.

IV. *Popular social philosophy has its counterpart today in a social gravitation or "movement" in the line of certain sympathies and assumptions begotten and fostered by reflection on contemporary societary conditions. In this movement some of the ultimate determinants of human destiny are emerging, yet the play of these profound forces is inconstant and erratic because at present they are almost as enigmatical to the men who trust as to*

those who challenge them. This movement combines with elements of promise all the elements of danger to which we referred above. It has recently been characterized by Professor Graham Taylor, whose vigorous language we quote, although it implies dissent from portions of the thought just expressed.

Only an intelligent appreciation of what the present sociological movement is qualifies one even to guess what the church may expect from it. Were it merely some or all of the forms in which it finds expression in current literature or present-day effort the question would perhaps admit of briefer and more definite answer. Whoever regards it, whether as claimant or critic, to be merely a species of literature, or the ideal of a few leaders of thought and action, or the copyrighted effusions of any particular school of theorists, or any mere method of work, or the fad of the fashionables, so totally misconceives the movement as to be incapable of seriously entertaining the idea of any vital relationship between it and the church, on the common ground of Christianity.

The conviction that it is nothing less than the social movement of modern life underlies this discussion, and alone warrants its suggestions. It is simply the way life is moving today, and along which "leaders" are really following afar off. It is the direction which the course of human affairs is taking, and would take if there were no distinctively sociological literature to record the watermarks of its progress. It is the new-born consciousness in the many of each other's existence and of the relationship of each to all as members one of another. This consciousness is born of God and these times, when "no man liveth unto himself," whether he would or not. It is the movement of the common mind to understand the complex relations of man to man in modern society, and to forge out the science and arts of living and working together. It is the movement of the common heart to realize the undying hope of social justice and human brotherhood. It is the movement of the common will to find and apply some adjustment of the disturbed relationships and dislodged classes, caused by the most revolutionary force ever introduced into human affairs, except the gospel, viz., the modern industrial system.

The present sociological movement stands for all this and more, when it is considered in relation to the church. Its science of sociology, however, is rapidly formulating the data and province of that

branch of scientific research which is strictly limited to the study of society as a whole, and the social sciences are laying the basis for the practical arts of living and working together within the specific classes and conditions to which the several social structures give rise. But while these new sciences are the vital self-expression of, and are absolutely essential to, the perpetuity, progress and power of the movement, they are and ever will be *far from being identical with it or comprehensive of it*. For this movement of life so far transcends the best efforts to formulate it, that it almost reduces them to an absurdity to identify them with it. This movement has its observers, but recognizes no authorities. It has its interpreters, but no line of thought or action has less human leadership. It is the mighty "Zeitgeist," the very spirit of all living, to which our Lord's description of the Holy Spirit may as truthfully, as reverently be applied, "It bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth." In its presence only the religious spirit and the scientific attitude are worthy of respect.<sup>1</sup>

This peculiar popular unrest of our era corresponds with two postulates of social philosophy held today in every variety of form and force by unprecedented numbers, first, that the relations of man to man are not what they should be; second, that something must be done directly, systematically and on a large scale to right the wrongs.

In thus pointing out that popular agitation for a remodeling of our social structure, and the logically antecedent popular philosophies of society are not chiefly academic facts, and that they are altogether more extensive than the scope of scholars' influence, we are calling attention to points in the situation which few theorists have duly considered. The relation of popular sociology to would-be scientific sociology should be settled in the minds of scholars before more confusion results. Altogether too much has been charged or credited to the professional students of society.

The fact that sociology is not primarily a product of the schools has escaped the attention of most observers. Popular attempts to explain present forms of society, and to get favor-

<sup>1</sup> *The Advance*, June 20, 1895.

ably placed for effecting change in social conditions are as independent of the schools as they are of the seasons. Some scholars are still of the opinion that sociology is not only without form and void, but that it must forever remain so, because nothing in the nature of things sanctions it; and the name is therefore merely a device to give new theorists a place. These critics know little about the deep currents of present popular thought. It is a very callow sociologist who imagines that he and his colaborers are inventing the subject-matter of a new science. They are trying to perfect means of answering obtrusive questions about society which the ordinary man is proposing every hour. They are not creating but merely representing popular curiosity. Life is so much more real to the people than to the schools that the people are no sooner possessed of some of the tools of thought, and some means of observation, than they proceed to grapple with more vital questions than the scholars had raised. Hence social philosophies, popular in source, partial in content, but potent in political effect, get vogue before scholars know the terms of the conditions which these rule-of-thumb philosophies claim to explain. The doctrines of professional sociologists are attempts to substitute revised second thought for the hasty first thoughts composing the popular sociologies in which busy men outside the schools utter their impressions.

V. *The facts thus sketched constitute a strenuous demand for authentic social philosophy.* Are men on the whole sane, or hysterical, or possibly paranoiac, in their attitude toward real and possible social conditions? Are the postulates of our social introspection valid or invalid? Have we learned all that can be known about the antecedents of present conditions, about the standards by which these conditions should be judged, about the type of future conditions toward which it is rational to aim, about the means at the disposal of man for the creation of a different social order? Unless they have a monopoly of such fundamental and circumstantial and comprehensive social philosophy, accredited by every pertinent scientific sanction, many men exercising the

office of public teacher today are grievously sinning against their fellows by aggressive and inflammatory sociological dogmatism. Science makes common cause with every other human interest when it insists that there must be adequate investigation and formulation of the conditions of human welfare before there can be any credible programmes for the wholesale promotion of welfare. The institutions which our generation inherits may be very crude, but they are the deposit of all the wisdom and goodness of the ages, in reaction with the ignorance and the evil. He who would reorder them should first understand them.

In the last chapter of his last important book Mr. Herbert Spencer says :

There exist a few who . . . . look forward through unceasing changes, . . . . to the evolution of a Humanity adjusted to the requirements of its life. And along with this belief there arises, in an increasing number, the desire to further the development. . . . . Hereafter the highest ambition of the beneficent will be to have a share . . . . in the making of Man. Experience occasionally shows that there may arise extreme interest in pursuing entirely unselfish ends ; and, as time goes on, there will be more and more of those whose unselfish end will be the further evolution of Humanity.

Precisely because permanent enlargement of human welfare is not a matter of shreds and patches, but a gain which depends upon the development of a superior type of manhood, capable of superior coöperation, do we maintain that the programme most directly adapted to the furtherance of that end is suppression of the riot of imagination and substitution of the order of investigation.

VI. *Many capable scholars are beginning to recognize in these conditions a summons to unique forms of service.* Our thesis implies no depreciation of the scholarship of the past. Splendid specialism has been amassing more knowledge than we have learned to use. A federation of scholarship is forming by which the products of divided labor upon knowledge needed for social purposes shall be combined and applied as means of promoting welfare. That which has been unconscious and accidental hitherto will be meth-



odically undertaken hereafter. Analytic and microscopic scholarship is abortive without the complementary work of the synthetic scholar who builds minute details into comprehensive structures. The conditions of human association are so involved that it is no longer pardonable to increase present popular sensitiveness and irritation by theorizing about plans for accelerating the rate of human improvement, unless we have reduced all available pertinent facts about past and present human associations to generalized knowledge, which shall indicate both direction and means of improvement.

This new task of scholarship is coming into recognition in every part of the world where thought is unfettered. Scholars are everywhere speaking out their dissatisfaction with fragmentary knowledge of society, and their ambition to contribute to knowledge that shall be properly dynamic. Mr. Benjamin Kidd's recent account of the state of the social sciences in England is a fair index of the condition against which there is everywhere edifying revolt. We quote him at length because the case is not materially different elsewhere. Mr. Kidd says :

When I set out to write *Social Evolution*, I was impressed, as I am sure many an earnest student of our social phenomena has been impressed before me, with the extraordinary contrast which the sciences that deal with man in society present, when compared with the practical and experimental sciences upon which they rest. I need not speak of the strength and vigor of the latter, and of the new life that has come to many of them with the knowledge of the last fifty years. All this is only as it should be. It is the contrast which is so striking. I am bound to say that this impression with which I set out has deepened and grown down to the present hour. What seems to come home to the observer is the conviction, however much he may for the time try to avoid it, that outside a small group of workers, who however stand more or less aloof from the main body of professional thought, we have really in England at the present day no school of thought producing men fitted to deal with the science of human society as a whole. It would be impertinent in me to make such a remark if it implied any intention to speak disparagingly of the learning displayed, and of the zealous and painstaking work being per-

formed, even under discouraging circumstances, in many of the departments of knowledge in question. My meaning is different. It is of the isolation of these departments of work from each other and from the sciences upon which they rest, that complaint has to be made. That unity of life now everywhere visible throughout the lower sciences, which causes them to run into each other at every point, and which renders strict lines of demarcation between them almost impossible, is nowhere to be found in the higher branches of knowledge. The workers in many of them still live in an earlier world of ideas which has long since passed away elsewhere. Unconscious of how the world has been moving, some of them seem even anxious to tell us that they know nothing of any other science, and that they desire to know nothing.

We have been hearing now for many years of a science of history, and many earnest and learned workers have borne a part in the uphill effort to raise history to that dignity which is its legitimate destiny. Nevertheless no spectacle can be more profoundly depressing to the worker who, trained in the accurate methods and the truth-seeking spirit of the lower sciences, and with the sense of the reign of universal law which these sciences give strong upon him, endeavors to take up the tangled threads of knowledge in this department of learning. In our universities and centers of learning he will find the exponents of the science still discussing whether it can ever have any laws, and even whether it should be founded on fact or romance. Let him take down any volume of history from its shelf, and endeavor to find any scientific clue therein to the natural laws underlying and controlling the majestic process of life which has unfolded itself in our western civilization, or to the natural laws that have directed the development of other social systems contemporaneous with it, or anterior to it. He will in all probability find none. If there is any attempt to discuss the matter at all, in the light of cause and effect, it will not be suggestive of the methods which science has followed elsewhere. Let him take up a representative organ of educated opinion, like *The Spectator*, and he will find an historical critic in a recent number regarding with a kind of dim wonder the connection between a few ignorant men, "who started forth to purify a world of which they knew nothing, by ideas which that world held to be contemptible," and the fact that they have nevertheless so transformed it that today the effect of their work and thought "is regulating the acts and the laws of the guides of all man-

kind." He will find the same critic equally impressed by "the spectacle of the half-naked ascetic sitting under his banyan, and giving out to brown men, ignorant as fishes, thoughts which today form the only antiseptic in the minds of a third of the human race;" and not less by that of "the epileptic camel driver, who wandered for months among the mountains of Arabia, to descend with thoughts which, bad or good, were so powerful that they bound the very tribes of the desert into an indissoluble brotherhood, and hurled them out, a nation of warriors, to tread down the highest existing organizations of the world." But he will find no explanation. It is all part of "the romance of history" the critic tells us. That is the formula of the writer, who, however, evidently is moved by the conviction that there must be some law underlying it all. But he has nothing better to send us to work with in this last decade of our scientific century.

Even if the impartial observer turns to that party to which his sympathies naturally go out,—the party which is opposed to the romance rendering of history, and which is at present devoting itself to the exhaustive study of periods,—he does not find, on the whole, anything much more satisfying. The efforts of this party seem to be directed towards founding a school of classifiers and abstractors. The limit of its aim seems to be to publish all available material that exists and to vouch for the authenticity of our sources of knowledge. Far be it from any one loyal to the spirit of science to say a single word in disparagement of work so useful and so necessary. But it would also be wrong to pretend to hope that we can ever construct a science of history merely in this frame of mind, or that the remnants of unpublished manuscripts, or the sweepings of sources of information still left unexploited—however precious—can so broaden the foundations of historical knowledge as to enable us thereupon to raise history to its proper dignity as a science.

It is not merely for the classifiers and abstractors that history is waiting now; it is for the workers who, trained in the methods of comparative science, will add to the present outfit of the historian the equipment necessary to enable him to regard history as the last complex but orderly phase in the evolution of life. It is only such a worker that can expect to utilize in the elucidation of our human and historical problems that vast store of knowledge which the sciences upon which history rests are now ready to contribute.

Nor is it easy to see how any fair-minded person, not committed

to opinions on either side, can look round today at the social sciences generally and not have to admit that they are all in much the same state as history. It would be difficult to imagine any more remarkable situation than that presented in our day by the science of economics. We have had within the last thirty years a theory of social development founded on an economic conception put forward by a worker quite outside the ranks of the official exponents of this science. I refer to Marx's view of modern society, and the theory of surplus value on which it is based. It is a view so utterly out of proportion, so evidently only partially true, and so clearly demonstrative at every point of the author's ignorance of the method of action in human society, of existing evolutionary forces larger than any he has taken account of, that it can hardly have any prominent place reserved to it in a future science of society; yet, strange as it may appear, there is at the present time scarcely a professor of economics in any university within the limits of our western civilization who has not felt the effects, direct or indirect, upon his work, of Marx's generalization. It grows in influence, despite the refutations it is continually receiving from the economists. Nay more, I am much inclined to think that a recent socialist writer (Dr. Edward Aveling, *The Student's Marx*) has not greatly overrated Marx's true position in placing him alone alongside of Darwin in influencing the thought of the nineteenth century. And in what consists the secret influence of Marx's generalization, masterly despite its errors? Simply, it seems to me, in this: that he has succeeded in basing his theory of society on a clear and largely true statement of the historical and human form of a relationship which has projected itself throughout the history of life. His work has taken no account of the factors, special to human society, which control and regulate this relationship. Yet the effect of the imperfect view which Marx has obtained, of a natural law operating in human society in a larger sense than the economists have been trained to understand, has so far raised him above his critics that his theory remains, as a political and social force, almost unaffected by the criticism of those who endeavor to deal with it from within the narrow circle of the merely economic position. And it has been, perforce, to the economist alone that society has had to turn for instruction. In the present state of knowledge there has been absolutely no science of society in any larger sense than his, to which the world could look for help and guidance in the problems with which it is

struggling in a kind of agony that gives a note to the entire literature of our period.

To turn from history and economics to professional philosophy is only to find the same lesson repeated. Outside the synthetic system of Mr. Herbert Spencer—that colossal edifice slowly and painfully (and surely to its own detriment) constructed by the author apart from and almost independent of the professional learning of the schools—the exponents of philosophy in England live in an old world of thought which has scarcely been affected by the influx of knowledge which the advancement of the lower sciences has brought. They are even, for the most part, unconscious of what is being done outside this world. There is no more striking sight in our time, when the perception of the unity and continuity of natural law throughout the entire realm of life has become the starting point of all real work, than to find men, authorities in their own departments of knowledge, endeavoring to discuss the problems of human existence and to formulate the ultimate principles of human nature without any real equipment for such a task, possessing scarcely any knowledge of those sciences which lead up to their subject, and almost without any perception of the immense and even revolutionary importance of the contributions which these sciences have made to that subject within the lifetime of the present generation. Even in the least fruitful period in the past this position would have been disastrous. For there is no lesson in the history of philosophy clearer and more emphatic than one which cannot be expressed in any better words than Professor Huxley's, viz., "The men who have made the most important positive additions to philosophy, such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant, not to mention more recent examples, have been deeply imbued with the spirit of physical science; and in some cases, such as those of Descartes and Kant, have been largely acquainted with its details. In truth, the laboratory is the fore-court of the temple of philosophy; and whoso has not offered sacrifices and undergone purification there, has little chance of admission into the sanctuary." And if this has been true in the past of those sciences upon which philosophy rests, how much more so in our own day, when these sciences have become the sources of knowledge that has transformed and reconstructed the very foundations of human thought!\*

\* *Nineteenth Century*, February 1895.

VII. If we are not self-deceived, no scholars in the world are more sagacious than those in the United States about the subordination of all special knowledge to larger relations. Nowhere are the representatives of special sciences less restricted by the contents of their particular material. Nowhere are scholars more anxious to generalize their special knowledge by coördinating it with knowledge of other portions or phases of reality. This trait of American genius makes the differentiation of sociology as a distinct department of thought at once certain and difficult. In each of the social sciences there are American scholars who are successful and inspiring leaders both in special research and in constructive combination of their own with other results. These men have been elaborating the method of sociology, although they may still prefer to distinguish their work by another name.

Able conducted American journals devoted to special social sciences publish in almost every number important papers upon topics which lead discussion far beyond the limits of their particular science. Without invading the field of these journals *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY* will be a medium for exchange of thought between scholars upon the work of developing an orderly view of associated human activities as a whole. In this *JOURNAL* a large number of American scholars, with many representative European sociologists will also try to express their best thoughts upon discoverable principles of societary relationship, in such a way that they might assist all intelligent men in taking the largest possible view of their rights and duties as citizens.

The *JOURNAL* will thus be primarily technical. It will be devoted to the organization of knowledge pertaining to the relations of men in society into a sociology that shall represent the best American scholarship. On the other hand the *JOURNAL* will attempt to translate sociology into the language of ordinary life, so that it will not appear to be merely a classification and explanation of fossil facts. As the contents of this number will show, it is not supposed essential to the scientific or even the tech-

nical character of thought that it shall be made up of abstractly formulated principles. On the contrary, the aim of science should be to show the meaning of familiar things, not to construct a kingdom for itself in which, if familiar things are admitted, they are obscured under an impenetrable disguise of artificial expression. If sociology is to be of any influence among practical men, it must be able to put its wisdom about things that interest ordinary men in a form which men of affairs will see to be true to life. That form will frequently be the one in which not theorists but men of affairs themselves view the facts concerned. These men are then the most authoritative sociologists. No subject which pertains to men's pursuits is beneath the notice of sociology, provided it can be treated so that its relation to involved pursuits becomes more evident.

While the sociological staff of The University of Chicago will be the responsible editors of the JOURNAL, the contributors will be men and women who are gathering the materials of social philosophy from the most diverse sources. The contents will vary from discussions of methodology to treatment of plans for social amelioration and to descriptions of minute social groups, or of specially significant social conditions, processes or functions. The JOURNAL will be the "organ" of the editors in no other sense than of any other responsible sociologists who may desire to present their thought in its pages. The platform of the JOURNAL will be simply that it is possible to so far increase our present intelligence about social utilities that there may be much more effective combination for the promotion of the general welfare than has thus far been organized; and accordingly help will be sought of anyone who can assist in defining the aims or in discovering the means of more rational associated effort.

In treating of specific proposals for social amelioration the aim will be to explain them in their relation not to immediate ends, but to the most remote results that can be anticipated. They will be estimated not by their value as palliatives, not with

paramount reference to the satisfaction of the persons whom they would directly affect, but by the nature of the modification which they seem likely to impose upon the type or the tendencies of society.

To many possible readers the most important question about the conduct of the JOURNAL will be with reference to its attitude toward "Christian Sociology." The answer is, in a word, toward Christian sociology sincerely deferential, toward alleged "Christian sociologists" severely suspicious.

Upon the platform thus indicated the editors will attempt to make THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY a factor of restraint upon premature sociological opinion, a means of promoting the development of a just and adequate social philosophy, and an element of strength and support in every wise endeavor to insure the good of men.